

Application No. 10/596,271
Amendment dated March 24, 2009
Reply to Office Action dated December 24, 2008

Amendments to the Drawings:

Fig. 2 of the drawings as been amended. The cross-hatching pattern for drawing element 20 has been changed to an elastic cross-hatching pattern. Replacement and annotated sheets of drawings showing the change are enclosed.

REMARKS

Claims 7-11 and 13 are pending. Claims 1-6 and 12 have been cancelled.

Responsive to the Examiner's objection regarding the Declaration, Applicants will submit a replacement Declaration in the near future.

With respect to the Examiner's objection regarding the drawings, Applicants have amended the cross-hatching pattern of element 20 in Fig. 2 to indicate an elastic material by use of heavier cross-hatching lines.

With respect to the Examiner's objections to the claims, Applicants have made a number of amendments to the present claims which Applicants submit will overcome the Examiner's objections.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of Claims 7-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicants have amended the language of independent Claim 7 to clearly indicate that Applicants are claiming the connector and not the corrugated conduit.

The Examiner rejected Claims 7-9 and 11 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,984,375 to Merrett ("Merrett '375"); rejected Claims 7, 10, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,267,415 to Frank ("Frank '415"); and rejected Claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Merrett '375 in view of German Patent No. DE 38 14 001 ("DE '001").

Independent Claim 7, as amended, calls for

A connector for connecting to an end of a corrugated conduit, the corrugated conduit including a plurality of elevated corrugations, said connector comprising:

a connecting section having a longitudinal axis;
an elongated connector portion extending from said connecting section and insertable into the end of the corrugated conduit, said connector portion having first and second ends and a conical section located proximate said first end, said conical section including a ramp surface sloping radially outwardly in a direction of said second end;

a clamp extending from said connecting section and spaced radially from said first end of said connector portion, said

clamp including an engaging nose movable into a clamping position wherein said nose fits between two of the elevated corrugations of the corrugated conduit to thereby prevent the conduit from being separated from said connector;
a releasing depression provided in said connecting section;
an arresting depression provided in said clamp; and
a sliding bushing surrounding said connecting section, said sliding bushing movable between a release position in which said sliding bushing is disposed in said releasing depression and said engaging nose is movable into said clamping position, and a locking position in which said sliding bushing is disposed in said arresting depression and said engaging nose is prevented from moving out of said clamping position.

Referring to Fig. 2 of the present application and as discussed in the specification, independent Claim 7 has been amended to call for the feature of the connecting section 1 including a releasing depression 22, an arresting depression 24 provided in the clamp 6, 7, and a sliding bushing 21 surrounding the connecting section 1 and movable between a release position in which the sliding bushing 21 is disposed in the releasing depression 23 and the engaging nose 15 (of the clamp 6, 7) is movable into a clamping position, and a locking position in which the sliding bushing 21 is disposed in the arresting depression 24 and the engaging nose 15 is prevented from moving out of the clamping position.

Merrett '375 fails to disclose the foregoing structure, as does Frank '415 and DE '001.

Frank '415 discloses a fastening arrangement, shown in Figs. 1-4, which includes a connector having a plurality of spring legs 15 or 15', together with a clamping element 20 or 20'. In the embodiment of Fig. 2, clamping element 20 may be a hose clamp or cable clamp, for example (col. 3, lines 20-22), which is placed around spring legs 15 and, as discussed at col. 3, lines 12-27, is slid onto spring legs 15. In the embodiment of Fig. 3, clamping element 20' is tapered to progressively tighten around spring legs 15' as same is slid thereon, as discussed at col. 3, lines 28-51. However, neither spring legs 15 or 15' nor any other portion of the connector of Frank '415 includes a releasing depression or arresting depression into which a sliding bushing

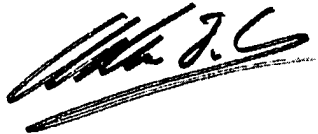
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is selectively received in release and locking positions, respectively, as called for in amended independent Claim 7.

Therefore, Applicants submit that amended independent Claim 7, as well as the claims which depend therefrom, are not anticipated by any of the references cited by the Examiner.

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby petition therefore and authorize that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 02-0385, Baker & Daniels LLP.

Respectfully submitted,



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Encs.: Replacement and Annotated Sheets of
Drawings